

Revelation 1

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.

“Revelation” means “uncovering” or “revealing”. This is the revelation given by God the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ. An angel received it from Christ and revealed it to the apostle John. John in turn reveals it to us. The Revelation concerns the Lord Jesus Christ, and end-time world events (both religious and secular) leading up to His Second Coming. “Must shortly come to pass” doesn’t mean that the contents of the book would be completed in a few years, instead “shortly” is actually “swiftly” in the Greek (*en tachei*) and refers to the rapid progress of the events from when they begin.

God wants to teach those willing to be servants, not theologians who are proud of their education. If we come to the Lord with a right heart attitude, He will open up the entire Bible to us! Come to it in pride and God will be silent!

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

This message is for all Christians (and Bible-believing Churches) of all ages. It is a big mistake to see the Book of Revelation as an historical document relating only to the first century church. John wrote about what he heard and saw. The symbolism in Revelation is an aid to understanding the books literal truth. The visions therefore illustrate the words given to him by Christ.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

A blessing is pronounced on those who read, hear and study the words found in this book. This is the first of the seven blessings of the book (see 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14).

Revelation 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Revelation 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Revelation 19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Revelation 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

It is vital to obey them. But how can they be obeyed if we do not read them? How can they bless us if we do not bother to study them? Those who first learned about the contents of Revelation heard the words spoken as they gathered for worship. They were blessed in what they heard, but they also obeyed its teaching (compare James 1:22-25).

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he

is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

There would be no blessing if the book was too hard for anyone to understand. These words offer the believer information regarding the Last Times of world history. Since the time is at hand (imminent) we do well to take heed to them, for they reveal how we should respond if such events do come upon us. No wonder so few are prepared! The next event on God's prophetic calendar is the Rapture.

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.

John writes these words to seven literal churches in Asia (though their application is for the church and Christian of all ages). These are the same seven churches we will study in chapters 2 – 3.

The greeting is directed from Heaven to earth, proving that Revelation is not an invention of John. John appears to be writing from that high position (Heaven via his vision). In this verse we see something of the eternal nature of God / Christ. The seven spirits are not likely to be the same as the seven angels who were over the seven churches, rather they are seven manifestations of the Holy Spirit. If they were angels then they would be called such. There might be a reference to Isaiah 11:2 here.

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Faithful Witness not the leaders of the Cults. This means that the Revelation record is absolutely true. Since He is the only reliable source of eternal truth the information contained in this book is pure. It comes from the same Jesus Christ who died on the cross and spilt His precious blood for our salvation, not the sugar-coated Christ of the New Age Movement and false religion. This same Jesus is the Prince of kings or Ruler of kings (see the next verse). He is “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:16). Only through Him can a man be saved and set free from sin.

Notice that all the emphasis on Jesus Christ! This is a characteristic of a true Bible believing church. The cults put all the emphasis on “prophets”, or some “pope”, or someone that is trying to be “like” the most high God (Isaiah 14:12-14).

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

The focus must always be upon the One, who in love shed His blood on the Cross to save us, and to wash away our sins.

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

He has made us to be kings and priests. Some translations have “Kingdom of priests” (see also Revelation 2:26-27, 20:4 and 1 Peter 2:9).

Revelation 2:26-27 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

But notice that all dominion and glory belong to Him. Take notice of this 'Kingdom Now' people!

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

He is coming with or in the clouds. This speaks of the Shekinah glory of God. This is not referring to the Rapture. He will come from Heaven – beyond the physical universe, beyond time and space, not from another planet as some Faith and Prosperity teachers teach.

Some suggest that the Day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of the Second Coming, but this verse proves that theory false. Why? Every eye will see Him (Matthew 24:30).

Matthew 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Every person of every nation will see the Coming of Christ Jesus. Television and the Internet will no doubt play a major part in this. The Jewish nation will see Him as the one they crucified and rejected (Zechariah 12:10).

Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

The whole world will cry bitter tears when they see Him. What fools they have been for rejecting Him! All, except for believing Jews and Gentiles, will be cast into the Lake of Fire forever. Why? Because they have followed the antichrist [the beast] instead of the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of all things. This title is used exclusively of God in the Old Testament and speaks of His externality and omnipresence (see Isaiah 44:6 and 48:12-13).

Isaiah 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Isaiah 48:12-13 Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.

He was there at the beginning (Genesis 1) and will be there at the end (Revelation 22:21). He is the Eternal Lord and God – The Almighty – The Great I AM. Wake up, Mr. Jehovah's Witness!

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

John was exiled on the Isle of Patmos by the Romans, a small island close to Turkey which is only about sixty square miles in size. The occupants of the island were criminals who were forced to do hard labour in the mines. This was during the 1st. century persecution of believers by Rome. It is remarkable to note that as Rome began the Christian era troubling the saints, so too will she at the close of the Church Age. She (the Vatican) will be behind the worst time of tribulation the true church of God has ever experienced. John was exiled there because Rome didn't like his teaching about Jesus as Lord.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

John was caught up in the Spirit on the Lord's Day to see this vision. The "Lord's Day" is often interpreted to be Sunday by some, but it is more likely to mean the day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns (see Revelation 4:2). The phrase "in the Spirit" (compare Ezekiel 37:1), as opposed to being "in the body" (2 Corinthians 12:2) reveals that John was spiritually caught up to see the Day of the Lord (the Millennial Reign Of Christ on earth (2 Peter 3:8).

Ezekiel 37:1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.

2 Corinthians 12:2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

2 Peter 3:8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

It is probable that the apostle was spiritually transported to see what was going to take place at the end of the ages. So John saw what we are experiencing today! He heard a trumpet-like voice speaking with him (see Exodus 19:16,19, 1 Corinthians 15:52, Psalm 47:5).

Exodus 19:16,19 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. [19] And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

1 Corinthians 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Psalm 47:5 God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Christ declares Himself to be the Pre-eminent one. There is none before Him, and there is none after Him. John was commanded to write to the seven churches of Asia Minor, which would be situated today in Turkey. These Churches are typical of all Christian churches throughout the past 2000 years. Many commentators suggest that the seven churches represent seven church ages. Please see the note that introduces chapter 2 for brief explanation of this view.

The names of the seven churches have the following meaning: (1) Ephesus – “fully purposed”. (2) Smyrna – “myrrh”. (3) Pergamos – “much marriage”. (4) Thyatira – “odour of affliction”. (5) Sardis – “red ones”. (6) Philadelphia – “brotherly love”. (7) Laodicea – “human rights”. If the “Church Age” view is correct, then Jesus will return during the Laodicean period.

It should be remembered that John was writing to seven literal churches in his day, but the message of Revelation is for all ages. Therefore, they can be seen as seven types of churches that exist today throughout the world. Every place that calls itself a “church” will fit in one of these seven church types. This is the most practical aspect of this study because we will be able to test ourselves according to God’s standard of how He expects a church to be.

The book mentioned in this verse is the one we are studying right now.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.

On turning to see the one to whom the trumpet-like voice belonged, John saw seven lampstands. These would have had the appearance of seven individual lampstands instead of the usual seven-branched candlestick (menorah) of Judaism, since these are Gentile churches rather than Jewish. The candlesticks represent the churches because they were meant to take the glorious light of the Gospel into the world (Matthew 5:16).

Matthew 5:16 [Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.](#)

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

In the midst of the lampstands he sees the Lord Jesus Christ walking about. Jesus is always in the midst of the true church (Matthew 18:20).

Matthew 18:20 [For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.](#)

“Son of Man” was Jesus’ favourite title and it is used 81 times in the Gospels. It is a Messianic title derived from Daniel 7:13.

Daniel 7:13 [I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.](#)

The lampstands represent the seven churches; therefore Christ is active within His churches. It is in the church that He manifests His presence today. He is seen wearing a golden breastplate, though some interpreters view this as a golden sash about His chest. Just like the high priest of the Old Testament, the Lord wears the Great High Priest’s breastplate. He is the only priest we have to do with! Both the breastplate and His robes represent His eternal righteousness and authority as the believer’s priest. They also indicate that He is the King.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire.

His hair as white as wool, as white as snow. This does not mean that His hair was like the white fluffy hair of the counterfeit Christ – Father Christmas! John is describing the appearance of His majestic glory. White hair represents both wisdom and glory in the Old Testament. His manifestation is similar to the ‘Ancient of Days’ (Daniel 7:9,13,22).

Daniel 7:9, 13, 22 [I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. \[13\] I saw in the night visions,](#)

and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. [22] Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

Therefore His white hair must speak of His eternal nature too.

His eyes can burn into even the darkest places of our hearts. His x-ray vision can see the true nature of the heart. He can see even the most hidden of our secret sins. His eyes were like a flame of fire, which speaks of His holiness. God alone can look into our souls to see what we really are. This searching will be very evident at the Judgement Seat (1 Corinthians 3:13).

1 Corinthians 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

His feet are like polished bronze (Daniel 10:6).

Daniel 10:6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

This speaks of His steadfastness and faithfulness. He will always be strong towards His people. He can always be relied upon. His voice was like many torrents of water converging into one gigantic waterfall (Daniel 10:6). This is the voice of absolute authority and power. He is the Judge of the Churches and so He moves among them to reveal what is right and wrong.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

He holds the seven stars in His right hand. The stars represent the angels over the seven churches. Some see the angels as the pastors over the churches since the word simply means 'messenger'.

From His mouth is seen a sharp two-edged sword. Both the stars in His hand and the sword in His mouth symbolise the fact that He alone has the authority to govern, guide, and discipline His church. His word (the Bible) is the church's final authority in faith and practice (Hebrews 4:12).

Hebrews 4:12 **For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**

If it is not in Scripture we must reject it. His word cuts out false doctrine and all that offends the truth.

John had seen the face of Jesus shine in beautiful majesty on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:2, John 17:5).

Matthew 17:2 **And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.**

John 17:5 **And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.**

He knows whom he is seeing. The apostle Paul had a similar experience on the Damascus Road. Here we truly see a vision of the glorified Christ. What kind of Jesus do you see in the word?

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.

All who ever saw the glory of God in this fashion have fallen upon their faces before Him. This is exactly what the disciples did on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:6).

Matthew 17:6 And when the disciples heard it , they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

Such awesome glory produces godly and holy fear in the human heart. The Lord does not want us to be terrified of Him, but He does expect reverence.

First and Last is a phrase used of Almighty God in Isaiah 44:6,

Isaiah 44:6 Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Therefore its use here reveals Christ's equality with God (see also Revelation 2:8, 22:13).

Revelation 2:8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.

Revelation 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Our relationship is with the Almighty and Eternal God. Jesus is both the Creator and the Consummator of every thing.

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

The First and Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Almighty, is the same person as "He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am

alive for evermore". This Jesus who is the Beginning and the End, who died for our sins, rose on the third day, never to die again, He is the Eternal God. He has the authority over every person's eternal destiny.

On the day He descended into Hades to proclaim His victory, Jesus set free the righteous whom it kept incarcerated (see Psalm 16:10, Luke 16:23-26, Acts 2:27, Ephesians 4:8-10, Hebrews 2:14-15 and 1 Peter 3:18-20).

Psalm 16:10 *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

Luke 16:23-26 *And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*

Acts 2:27 *Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

Ephesians 4:8-10 *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men, (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

Hebrews 2:14-15 *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

1 Peter 3:18-20 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

He has the Keys of Death and Hell – not Satan, for Jesus Christ conquered death and Hell.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

John is once again commanded to record everything he sees in the visions. The fact that the command is repeated proves just how important the book of Revelation is to the Church of Christ. Not to receive it is to blatantly disregard the very word of God for our generation.

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

“Mystery” here simply means something that mere human logic and intelligence cannot fathom out. It requires divine revelation.

Jesus reveals to John the meaning of the first symbols in Revelation. The seven stars represent the seven angels who are over the seven churches. There may be a dual interpretation here. The angels may represent real angels – there is no real reason why this should not be so, for God has promised to give His angels charge over us (Psalm 91:11, Hebrews 13:2).

Psalm 91:11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

Hebrews 13:2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

It is entirely possible that God has placed an angel over every Bible-believing congregation. The other interpretation is that the angels (messengers) are simply the ministers or pastors of the churches. The major problem with this theory is that the Bible never calls men angels.

The seven golden lampstands symbolise the seven churches. Why are only these churches mentioned? What about the Jewish Church, the Roman Church and the Greek Church? (a) The Jewish Church became legalistic. (b) The Roman Church paganised Christianity. (c) The Greek Church went after Gnosticism. Notice, too, that God has rejected the so-called orthodoxy of the three mentioned.